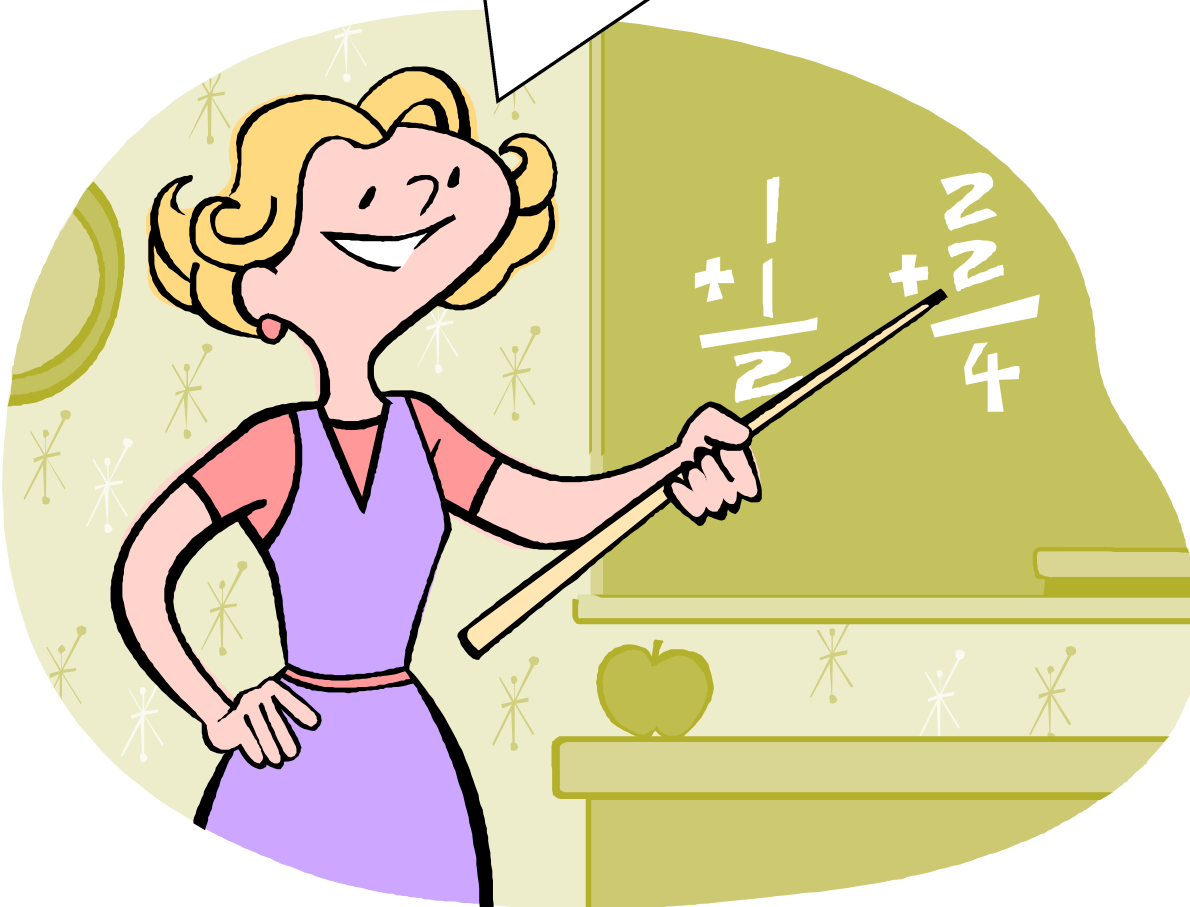


# Sample Comics Lesson Plans



Compiled by Robin Brenner  
Contact her at [robin@noflyingnotights.com](mailto:robin@noflyingnotights.com) with questions!

# Reviews & Resources

Compiled May 2009

## Books

### **Understanding Manga and Anime**

By Robin Brenner

ISBN: 978-1-59158-332-5

This is my own recently published guide to the wide and complex world of Japanese manga and anime, for anyone curious about the medium.

### **Getting Graphic! Comics for Kids**

by Michele Gorman

ISBN: 978-1-58683-327-5

A clear, useful annotated bibliography of over one hundred titles for ages 4-12.

### **Getting Graphic! Using Graphic Novels to Promote Literacy with Preteens and Teens**

by Michele Gorman

ISBN: 1-58683-089-9

A concise and creative guide to using graphic novels to promote literacy

### **The Power of Reading**

ISBN: 1-59158-169-9

by Stephen Krashen

Features an amusing and illuminating chapter all about the influence of comics on vocabulary and literacy

### **Graphic Novels in Your Library Media Center: A Definitive Guide**

ISBN: 1-59158-142-7

by Allyson Lyga and Barry Lyga

The best one-stop guide to graphic novels in schools

### **Understanding Comics**

ISBN: 0-060-97625-X

### **Making Comics**

ISBN: 0-060-78094-0

and **Reinventing Comics**

ISBN: 0-060-95350-0

by Scott McCloud

The entertaining and informative guides to the history, creation and current status of sequential art, comics, and graphic novels

### **Graphic Novels: A Genre Guide to Comic Books, Manga, and More**

ISBN: 978-1-59158-132-1

by Michael Pawuk

A guide to all kinds of graphic novels, a great quick reference resource

### **A Librarian's Guide to Graphic Novels for Children and Tweens**

ISBN: 978-1-55570-626-5

by David Serchay

A solid guide with valuable historical insight on graphic novels for young audience.

### **The 101 Best Graphic Novels**

ISBN: 978-1-55570-626-5

by Steve Weiner

A valuable look at the best examples of the format, from one of our local library directors.

## Professional Reviews

### **Booklist**

Graphic Novel Spotlight special issue published annually every February. Graphic novel and manga reviews interspersed throughout the review section

### **Library Journal**

Bi-monthly review column by Steve Raiteri and Martha Cornog. At the Library Journal website (<http://www.libraryjournal.com>), they also provide web-only weekly Graphic Novel Xpress reviews.

### **Library Media Connection**

"Getting Graphic" column by Michele Gorman. Reviews periodically in the review section.

### **Publishers Weekly**

Regularly covers manga and anime trends in short feature articles. Graphic novel and manga reviews interspersed throughout the review section.

### **School Library Journal**

Graphic novel and manga reviews interspersed throughout the review section.

### **Voice of Youth Advocates**

"Graphically Speaking" bi-monthly review column by Kat Kan. Graphic novel and manga reviews interspersed throughout the review section, marked with an oval red "g" symbol indicating the graphic format.

## Online Lesson Plans and Reviews

### **Bookshelf from Diamond Comics**

<http://bookshelf.diamondcomics.com/public/>

A great start for using comics and graphic novels in schools, including articles, lesson plans, and core lists.

### **Comics in the Classroom**

<http://comicsintheclassroom.net/>

An excellent resource for using comics and graphic novels in the classroom— including lesson plans!

### **Good Comics for Kids**

<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/540000654.html>

A new blog at School Library Journal devoted to comics for kids and teens, featuring commentary and reviews from librarians, parents, educators, and comics experts.

### **Kids Love Comics!**

<http://www.kidslovecomics.com/>

A growing site from the new nonprofit organization run by Amelia Rules! creator Jimmy Gownley

### **No Flying No Tights**

<http://www.noflyingnotights.com/>

My own review site, featuring reviews for kids and teens. Currently on hiatus for reconstruction, but reviews are also found on Teenreads.com.

### **Teaching with Comics**

<http://www.flummery.com/teaching/>

From one of the leaders in Maryland's Comic Book Initiative of the Maryland State Department of Education, a collection of templates and advice on teaching comics in school.

### **Teaching Comics**

<http://www.teachingcomics.org/>

From the National Association of Comics Arts Educators, lesson plans and resources, focused on teens and adults.

## Elements of the Universe

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Creating a chemical element super hero comic:

**STEP 1** Select a chemical element to draw as a super hero cartoon character and write it here: \_\_\_\_\_.

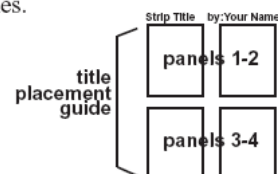
**STEP 2** Place your new cartoon character in a situation that highlights their physical and chemical properties.

**STEP 3** Create a four panel comic centered around your chemical element super hero.

**STEP 4** Add as little or as much text as you feel necessary.

**STEP 5** Be sure all art is inked carefully in black ink and lettering is legible. Use of white-out is okay.

**STEP 6** Don't forget to place the title of your comic in the space directly above your topmost panel(s).



## Comic Book Comparison #1

Comparing comic book art:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 1

Select two comic books with different art styles from the list below.

**Astroboy, Pop Gun War, Blankets, Sweaterweather, Big Clay Pot, Pinky and Stinky, Superman Adventures, Fantastic Four, The Phoenix, Batman: Dark Knight, Batman: Year One, Tales of the Beanworld, Bone, Goodbye Chunky Rice, Pulpatoon Pilgrimage**

### STEP 2

Sketch a character from your selections and answer the questions below.

#### Selection #1:

Character sketch:

Is the art more stylized or realistic? How so?

---

---

---

---

---

Why do you think the artist has chosen this style of art?

---

---

---

---

---

How would the story be affected if the artist had chosen the same style of art as your **second** comic book selection?

---

---

---

---

#### Selection #2:

Character sketch:

Is the art more stylized or realistic? How so?

---

---

---

---

---

Why do you think the artist has chosen this style of art?

---

---

---

---

---

How would the story be affected if the artist had chosen the same style of art as your **first** comic book selection?

---

---

---

---

### STEP 3

Answer the questions below.

Which style of art do you prefer? Why?

---

---

---

---

---

# Book Report Alternative: Comic Strips and Cartoon Squares

## Author

Traci Gardner  
Blacksburg, Virginia

From Read Write Think (<http://www.readwritethink.org>)  
Linked via Comics in the Classroom

## Grade Band

6-8

## Estimated Lesson Time

Two 50-minute sessions

## Overview

Students tire of responding to novels in the same ways. They want new ways to think about a work of literature and new ways to dig into it. By creating comic strips or cartoon squares featuring characters in books, they're encouraged to think analytically about the characters, events, and themes they've explored in ways that expand their critical thinking by focusing on crystallizing the significant points of the book in a few short scenes.



## From Theory to Practice

This activity invites the student to think symbolically. The students choose key scenes for their characters and books, find landscapes and props that fit the scenes, and compose related dialogue. These student representations of the books, with their multifaceted texts using symbols, images, texts, and metaphor, succeed in the classroom because they provide a snapshot of the students' comprehension of the ideas in the texts.

## Further Reading

McCloud, Scott. 1993. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: HarperCollins.

## Student Objectives

Students will

- identify appropriate landscapes, characters, and props that relate to the events and characters in the books they've read.
- interact with classmates to give and receive feedback.
- explore how audience, purpose, and medium shape their writing.

---

## Resources

- [Comic Strip Planning Sheet](#)
- [Comic Strip Rubric](#)
- [Comic Creator Student Interactive](#)

## Instructional Plan

### Resources

- Copies of the [Comic Strip Planning Sheet](#)
- Copies of the [Comic Strip Rubric](#)
- [Comic Creator Student Interactive](#)
- (optional) Graphic novels and comic book versions of well-known books for inspiration and comparison

### Preparation

1. Before this lesson, students will read a book independently, in literature circles, or as a whole class.
2. Ask students to bring copies of the book that will be the focus of their comic strips to class for reference.
3. Make copies or overheads of the planning sheet and the rubric.
4. Practice the steps for using the [Comic Creator](#) with your computers.

### Instruction and Activities

#### *Session 1*

1. Introduce the writing activity, sharing the planning sheet, rubric, and sample graphic novels and comic books.
  - a. Share the example graphic novels and comic books with students and explain the assignment, pointing out each of the parts that are included.
  - b. Lead students through discussion of the key elements for each part. Sample discussion questions can include the following:
    - What are the important characteristics of a caption? What do the words in the captions tell you about the scene depicted?
    - What kind of landscape makes sense for the scene?
    - What props can you associate with the scene?
    - How kind of dialogue bubble makes sense for the interaction?
    - What connects one scene to the next in the comic strip?
2. Once you're satisfied that students understand the assignment, demonstrate the [Comic Creator Student Interactive](#) and discuss its relationship to the [Comic Strip Planning Sheet](#). Be sure to cycle through the options for characters and dialogue bubbles to show students the range of options available.
3. Have students begin work with the [Comic Strip Planning Sheet](#) to plan their book reports. Students can work individually or in groups on this project.
4. Encourage students to interact with one another, to share and receive feedback on their plans for comic strips. Since these comics will be shared in the class as well as in the library, hearing the feedback and comments of other students helps writers refine their work for their audience.
5. Students can continue working on the project for homework if desired.

1. Remind students of the goals and elements included in this project. Answer any questions students have.
2. To make comic strips, have your students follow these basic steps, referring to their planning sheet as they work in the [Comic Creator](#):
  - a. For the comic title, name the scene (or scenes) that will be depicted.
  - b. For the comic subtitle, name the book where the scene is found.
  - c. Include your name or the names of the members of your group as the authors of this comic strip.
  - d. Choose the six-frame comic strip. (Alternately, have students choose the one-frame cartoon square and focus their work on an important scene in the book).
  - e. In each of the six frames of the comic strip show a significant event from the book.
  - f. Under each picture or cartoon, write a caption that provides additional detail on the scene.
  - g. Print at least three copies of your finished comic strip.
3. While students work, again encourage them to interact with one another, to share and receive feedback on their plans for comic strips.
4. After the comic strips are printed out, students can decorate them with markers or other classroom supplies.
5. As students finish, ask them to turn in two copies of the comic strip (one for you and one for the librarian—the third copy is for the students to keep).

## Web Resources

### [Integrative Art: American Comic Strips](#)

[http://www.psu.edu/dept/inart10\\_110/inart10/cmbk1main.html](http://www.psu.edu/dept/inart10_110/inart10/cmbk1main.html)

This site provides a history of American comic strips, including information on graphic novels that can serve as background on the genre.

### [Scott McCloud](#)

<http://www.scottmccloud.com>

Visit the Web site of Scott McCloud, author of *Understanding Comics* and *Reinventing Comics*, for background on the genre, inspirations, and sample comics.

## Student Assessment/Reflections

For more formal assessment, use the [Comic Strip Rubric](#) which is tied to the elements included in the planning sheet.

On the other hand, nothing is as useful as the feedback that they'll receive by sharing their comic strips with their peers. Informal feedback from students who read the comics and search out the related book are excellent feedback for students.

---

## [NCTE/IRA Standards](#)

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

11 - Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).





WHAT'S HOT

WHAT'S GOOD



**Bestsellers**  
**Graphic Novel Reviews**  
**Upcoming Releases**  
**New Releases**  
**Core Lists**

**School Articles**  
**Lesson Plans**  
**Library Articles**  
**MD Comic Book Initiative**

**Success Stories**  
**Press Coverage for GNs**  
**Graphic Novel Notebook**

**What Are Graphic Novels**  
**What is Manga**  
**Why Use Graphic Novels**  
**Comics History**

**Reference Resources**  
**Glossary**  
**Helpful Links**

**Ordering GNs**  
**Contact Us**  
**Subscribe to Bookshelf**  
**About Bookshelf**  
**Lead Stories Archive**  
**Upcoming Events**

## Lesson Plans

### Owly

**Rationale:** Wordless stories are an excellent tool to use in an ESL classroom. Because of these stories' wordless nature, they can be adapted to the language and ability level of the English language learners in your class. Top Shelf Productions' series of *Owly* graphic novels relies solely on expressions and symbols to tell its heartwarming stories of friendship, understanding and acceptance.

**Grade Levels:** All grade levels

**Objective:** After reading the opening section of *Owly*, the student will be able to develop language, creative thinking and enhance future reading and writing skills; identify details; see cause and effect; make judgments and draw conclusions.

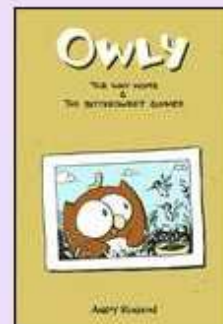
**Time Allotted:** Depending on class length. One 90 minute class or two 45 minute classes.

Using a wordless graphic novel like *Owly* is beneficial for many reasons. One of which is the fact that a single panel or page can offer many different types of lessons - identifying and making sentences with new vocabulary, creating a story from the picture, etc. This allows teachers to utilize the book for various lessons and gear each one for different language levels.

#### Direct Teaching:

1. Before reading, spend time describing the picture on the front cover of the book so that it can provide a clue for the students as to what the book is about.
2. After identifying the book's title character Owly, preview the other characters with the group. Have them decide on names for these other characters, asking them questions that will explain why they chose those particular names.
3. Since you will only be reading the initial pages of the book, give the students time to scan the book independently. At this point, some may speed past while others may lag behind.
4. After this initial silent reading, go back and "read" the opening panels aloud with the students, making sure to ask the students to help explain what is going on in the story. You should stop periodically during the story to check for comprehension.
5. Have them observe what is happening. Come up with a core vocabulary for the events and actions in the story. All of this will help strengthen the students' acquisition skills. Lead them into discussion in which the students freely discuss the various aspects of the story: putting new vocabulary words into sentences, making sense out of the story, etc.
6. When it is time to "compose" the story, the students will dictate the events to you as you write their sentences on the board or overhead projector. After each sentence is written, it should be read aloud to help them clarify what's been dictated. This reinforces reading skills and helps ESL students understand the flow of the story.
7. When dictation of the story is complete, you should read it once all the way through, while the students follow the action in each panel. Then the group can read with the teacher before students take turns reading individually.

Moreover, each student might have a different interpretation of the events in the story based on their own cultures (for example, some words or expressions might not exist in certain cultures). For advanced students or adults, have them write about their experience and how they might differ from the consensus interpretation.





## Comic Strip Planning Sheet

Scene & Actions That Occur	Characters Present	Landscape & Props	Caption

**Landscape Options:** Horizon Line, Inside Room, Lake, Mountain, Road or River, Blank, Cave, City

**Props:** Book, Rock, Castle, Chair, Cloud, Computer, Bench or Table, House, Lighting, Moon, Notebook, Musical Notes, Pencil, Pine Tree, Radio/CD Player, School, Space Ship, Sun, Leafy Tree, Television

## Rubric for Comic Strip Reports

<b>Choice of Scenes</b>	Lists all the most important events that occur in the book without revealing the conclusion.	Lists most of the important events in the book without revealing the conclusion, but misses 2 or 3 major events.	Lists most of the important events in the book, but either highlights unimportant points or reveals the conclusion.	Lists some events in the book, but information is incomplete or focused on less important points.
<b>Captions</b>	Captions are related to the scenes and the book, and the connections are easy to understand.	Captions are related to the scenes and the book, and most connections are easy to understand.	Captions are related to the scenes and the book, but the connections are less obvious.	Captions do not relate well to the scenes. There seems to be no connection or connections are very general.
<b>Characters</b>	The main characters are clearly identified, and their actions and dialogue are well-matched to their actions and dialogue in the book.	The main characters are clearly identified, and their actions and dialogue match actions and dialogue in the book.	The main characters are identified, but actions and dialogue are too general to show their relationship to the book.	It is hard to tell who the main characters are, or main characters in the comic are not the main characters in the book.
<b>Landscape and Props</b>	Landscape and props are directly related to the theme or purpose of the book and enhance understanding of the scene.	Landscape and props are directly related to the theme or purpose of the book.	Landscape and props are generally related to the theme or purpose of the book.	Landscape and props seem randomly chosen OR distract the reader.
<b>Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar</b>	There are no spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.	There are 1-3 spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.	There are 4-5 spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.	There are more than 5 spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.

From Read Write Think (<http://www.readwritethink.org>)  
Linked via Comics in the Classroom

## Teaching Resources

- Home
- Exercises
- Find a Comics Teacher
- Lesson Plans
- Sample Scripts
- Study Guides
- Handouts
- Syllabi
- Comics in Classrooms
- Schools with Comics Classes

## Teachingcomics.org

- Contributors
- Contact Us
- Contribute Materials
- Copyright and Use Information

## User Login

Username

Password

☐ Remember Me

[Lost Password?](#)

No Account Yet? [Create an account](#)

## Teaching Literary Devices with Comics



Written by Nancy Frey and Doug Fisher

**Grade Levels:** English Language Arts grades 6-8, 9-12

**Lesson Objectives:**

Identify literary devices used in texts, such as metaphors, mood, tone, plot structures, symbolism, irony, etc.

Incorporate identified literary devices in original writing

**Lesson Description:** Students will learn about literary devices featured in narrative texts and analyzed by readers to understand the meaning of the text. Choice of literary devices for these lessons is left to the teacher, who uses picture books or comics used to support analysis of the focus elements. Students then use the software program Comic Life to create their own comics featuring literary devices taught in the class. (See <http://plasq.com/> for more information about this inexpensive and award-winning software program.)

**Time Required:** 2-3 class periods

**Equipment Required:** Overhead or data projector, copies of picture books or comics chosen for the lesson, a collection of digital photographs, and computers with the Comic Life program installed.

### Project Implementation

#### Lesson 1

**Teacher Modeling:** Begin by introducing the literary device selected for this unit. For example, the literary device of foreshadowing involves techniques the author uses to provide clues to an event that will occur later in the story. Explain that readers look for details that may suggest a future plot turn. In addition, readers pause during the reading to recall previous clues that may have first seemed insignificant, but now have taken on importance. Authors use a number of techniques to foreshadow, including dialogue that reveals a character trait, describing the behavior of one or more characters, a plot turn that alters the circumstances for a character, or a brief setting change that divulges information that will become crucial later in the story.

The Caldecott-awarding winning picture book Tuesday by David Wiesner (1991) is an ideal example of foreshadowing. Introduce this wordless picture book to the students, displaying the illustrations. The first page sets the stage: "Tuesday evening, around eight." Read each page with students, looking for the ways in which the illustrator foreshadows a strange event that is about to occur. The second page consists of three panels, zooming in on a scene of a turtle sitting on a log, eyes turned to the sky in alarm. Guided Instruction: Continue reading each page with the students, pointing out where foreshadowing is occurring. In a few pages they will understand that flying frogs are up to minor mischief in the local town. Once finished, read Tuesday together again, this time asking students to identify the ways in which the how the illustrator/author foreshadowed events in the story. Compare these to the ways in which a writer uses techniques to foreshadow in prose text.

**Collaborative Learning:** Now that students are comfortable with the literary device and techniques used, give students examples of other comics or excerpts from graphic novels that contain similar techniques. Two excellent teacher resources are both by Will Eisner, often called "the grandfather of graphic novels." Graphic Storytelling (1996) and Comics and Sequential Art (1985) both feature detailed explanations of the techniques used in visual narratives, and how they are linked to prose novels. Invite students to work together to select a comic or graphic novel excerpt and discuss the literary device(s) used. Ask partners to compose a written summary of the story, with the attached comic. Remind students that they will create their own visual narrative using a software program.

#### Lesson 2

**Teacher Modeling:** Use a data projector to show students how to use the Comic Life software program. Users need only a collection of digital photographs such as those stored electronically in iPhoto. Visual narratives are easily composed using this program because users can select the grid pattern (including number of frames needed), design dialogue boxes, and apply artistic treatments to the selected photos to create a visual narrative in comic form.

**Guided Instruction:** Construct a simple comic using Comic Life with students. Ask them to make decisions about the storyline as well as the formatting.

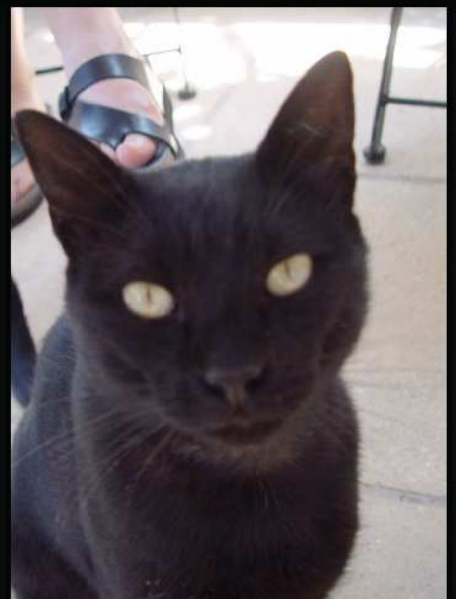
**Collaborative Learning:** Over one or two class periods, ask students to work in pairs to review digital photos and construct a story using the literary device you have been teaching. Students should produce a visual narrative that features the device, along with a written summary of the story.

We've included a visual narrative entitled, "Black and White," (download PDF below) written for a lesson on foreshadowing by two of our students using the Comic Life program. Note that the students used dialogue to provide clues about the subject in panels 1-3, followed by a scene change in panel 4 that features a black and white animal print. Panel 5 switches back to the original setting, but it is only in the final panel that it becomes apparent that what caused the white and spotted cats alarm was the presence of a black cat. As our students explained to us, "People stop and whisper sometimes when we're walking in a neighborhood where there's not a lot of African-Americans. We can spot the clues early, like foreshadowing. Those clues tell us what we can expect."

### Attachments:

[Visual narrative, "Black and White"](#) [Visual narrative, "Black and White"] 1967 Kb





---

# Buzz! Whiz! Bang! Using Comic Books to Teach Onomatopoeia

## Author

Maureen Gerard  
Phoenix, Arizona

From Read Write Think (<http://www.readwritethink.org>)  
Linked via Comics in the Classroom

## Grade Band

3-5

## Estimated Lesson Time

Four 60-minute sessions

## Overview

Comic books can be useful tools in improving literacy and teaching even reluctant readers some of the terminology typically associated with other forms of text. In this lesson, students will be introduced to onomatopoeia, which describes words that imitate the natural sound associated with an action or an object. Using comic books and strips, students will find onomatopoetic words, develop a vocabulary list from the words, and discuss why writers, especially writers of comics, use onomatopoeia. Students then use an online tool to create their own comic strips using onomatopoeia.

## From Theory to Practice

Norton, B. (2003). The motivating power of comic books: Insight from Archie comic readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(2), 140-147.

Comic books have had a motivating power in literacy development for children, especially young boys, since their introduction in the 1930s. This nontraditional type of literature – often dismissed by educators as superficial and shallow – is highly visual, contains complex literary elements, and lends itself to critical examination of moral, ethical, and social issues.

McCloud, S. (1994). *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Collins.

Moon, B. (1999). *Literary terms: A practical glossary* (The NCTE Chalkface Series). National Council of Teachers of English: Urbana, Illinois.

## Student Objectives

Students will

- Increase their knowledge of literary terms and how they are used in everyday writing by defining *onomatopoeia* using comic strips or books
- Demonstrate comprehension of onomatopoeia by locating onomatopoetic words in comic books
- Explore the effect onomatopoeia has in comic books and other narratives through a class discussion
- Apply their knowledge of onomatopoeia and the structure and narrative form of comics to create their own comic strips containing onomatopoetic words



---

## Resources

- **Classroom resources**

Copies of comic books or strips

[Comic Strip Planning Sheet](#)

[Comic Strip Rubric](#)

LCD or overhead projector

Chart paper and markers

- **Internet resources**

[Comic Creator](#)

[Archie Comics](#)

[The Official Peanuts Website](#)

[Garfield and Friends Official Site](#)

## Instructional Plan

### Preparation

1. This lesson assumes that students have previous experience with the structure of comic books and comic strips. If students need to build their background knowledge about comics, consider completing the lessons [Comics in the Classroom as an Introduction to Genre Study](#) and [Comics in the Classroom as an Introduction to Narrative Structure](#) prior to teaching this lesson. Combining these lessons creates a mini-unit of literary investigations using comic books or strips.
2. Choose some sample comic strips to share with the students that contain multiple examples of onomatopoeia. You will want one or two to use as examples with the class and then a variety of examples for students to explore on their own. Online resources for comic strips include [Archie Comics](#), [Garfield and Friends Official Site](#) and [The Official Peanuts Website](#).
3. Arrange to use an LCD projector to share the comic strips with the class or print them and make transparencies. Print copies of the comics that students will explore independently (see Session 1, Step 6).
4. Make sure that students have permission to use the Internet, following your school policy. If you need to, reserve a session in your school's computer lab (see Session 3).
5. Familiarize yourself with the [Comic Creator](#) and bookmark it on your classroom or lab computers. This online tool allows students to create a comic strip using a set of characters and props. Students have the ability to write their own captions.
6. Make copies of the [Comic Strip Planning Sheet](#) and the [Comic Strip Rubric](#) for each student. Students will use the planning sheet to draft and revise their work before actually creating and printing their comic panels on the Comic Creator. Introduction of the Comic Strip Planning Sheet provides an excellent mini-lesson for reviewing the literary elements of character, setting, and plot.

## Instruction and Activities

### Session 1

1. Show the sample comics you have chosen to the class using the transparencies or LCD projector. Tell students that you will read the comics aloud and that as you do so, they should listen for words that imitate the natural sound associated with an action or an object, for example *bang* or *slam*.
2. When you are finished, ask students to tell you what words like this they heard. Highlight these words by writing them on chart paper or using a marker on the transparency.
3. Explain that words like this are examples of *onomatopoeia*. Write *onomatopoeia* on a piece of chart paper or the board so that students can see how it is spelled.
4. Reread the comic with the whole class, instructing students to read the onomatopoetic words using sound effects and emphasis. For example, have them read a word like *boom* loudly, with emphasis placed on the rounded vowel sounds created by the double /oo/.
5. Have students write the word *onomatopoeia* in their personal dictionaries with this basic definition: words that make the sound of the action or object. If any of the words you located in the sample comics are unfamiliar to students, they should add these as well.

The definition of *onomatopoeia* could also head a word wall made from the chart paper list. This word wall should be posted where students can easily see it while they work on their own comic strips later in the lesson.

6. Talk about why writers of comic strips would use *onomatopoeia* and what function these words serve in a narrative. Questions for discussion include:
  - What effect does using *onomatopoeia* have in a story?
  - Why are comic strips a good place to find examples of these kinds of words?
  - What kinds of synonyms can you find for these words? (i.e., *close hard* instead of *slam*) How does it change the story if you substitute the synonym?
7. Pass out copies of the sample comic strips you have printed for students to use in locating *onomatopoeias*. Allow time for students to find the *onomatopoeias* and to share the humor and story of the comics with each other.
8. Close the lesson by discussing new or unusual *onomatopoeias* students found in their comics; add these to the class word wall or have students add them to their personal dictionaries.

### Session 2

1. Review the definition of *onomatopoeia* and the list of onomatopoetic words from the previous lesson, using the word wall if you have posted one. Ask students to think of any onomatopoetic words that are not included in the list; add any that they are able to come up with.
2. Ask students to remember some of the ways they saw *onomatopoeias* being used in the comics they looked at in the previous session. What are some of the ways they might use these words in creating a comic strip of their own?

3. Give each student a copy of the [Comic Strip Planning Sheet](#). Explain that they are to use this handout to help them brainstorm a six-panel comic strip. Talk about how, like a book, a comic strip tells a story and has a plot, characters, and action. For each panel, they should list the landscape and props they will use (chosen from the list on the sheet), the characters present in that panel, the actions that take place, the caption or words the characters speak, and any onomatopoeias they plan to use.
4. Give students the rest of this session to work on their planning sheets. Allow students to work individually or in pairs to create their comic strips. Encourage discussion and sharing of ideas of how to use onomatopoeia. Circulate among the students to monitor progress, provide support in writing, and to assess their understanding of onomatopoeia. Students should save their planning sheets to use in Session 3.

### Session 3

**Note:** Students will use computers for this session, so if necessary, you should conduct all or part of it in the computer lab.

1. Demonstrate the use of the [Comic Creator](#). Explain that students will begin their own writing project to create a six-panel comic strip with dialogue that includes onomatopoeias. Students should print their work when they complete it.
2. Distribute the [Comic Strip Rubric](#) and review it. Tell students that they should use the rubric check their comic strips when they have finished their work. Explain that you will use this same rubric when you evaluate their comic strips.
3. Ask students to use the [Comic Strip Planning Sheets](#) they filled out in Session 2 to complete a comic using the Comic Creator. Circulate among the students to monitor progress and provide support as they work. Collect the printed versions of the comics when students have completed them.

### Session 4

Share students' comics with the entire class by projecting them on an overhead or displaying them on a board. Discuss students' use of onomatopoeia. Questions for discussion include:

- How does onomatopoeia work in this comic strip? What does it add to the story?
- How would the comic strip be different without using onomatopoeia?
- Can you think of any additional ways this student could have used onomatopoeia?

### Extensions

- To help develop reading fluency, assign roles and make copies of the comics with the respective parts of the dialogue highlighted. Have students practice reading the different parts out loud. Present the comic panels on an overhead projector while students read the parts dramatically for the whole class.
- Organize a comic book convention for students to read and critique fellow students' comics.

## Student Assessment/Reflections

- Informally assess students' understanding of onomatopoeia, their ability to locate onomatopoetic words, and their grasp of how and why onomatopoeia is used during the discussion in Session 1 and while you circulate as students are writing their own comics.
- Use the [Comic Strip Rubric](#) to assess understanding and use of onomatopoeia in the student-created comic strip panels.
- Assess students' abilities to locate onomatopoetic words by giving them another comic strip or book (or some other form of text) and asking them to identify and record the onomatopoeias they find.

---

## IRA/NCTE Standards

2 - Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

4 - Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5 - Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

6 - Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).